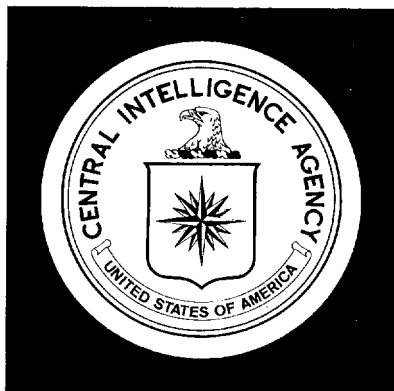


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*The Likelihood of Sino-Soviet Hostilities:
A Progress Report on a Quantitative Project*

DIA and DOS
review(s) completed.

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PR 76-10075

22 November 1976

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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE
OFFICE OF POLITICAL RESEARCH

Progress Report No. 19

22 November 1976

THE LIKELIHOOD OF SINO-SOVIET HOSTILITIES

This project consists of three quantitative approaches to Sino-Soviet relations. A team of analysts, drawn from various components of the CIA and concerned with different aspects of Chinese and Soviet affairs, examines on a continuing basis evidence on the possibility of one or another level of Sino-Soviet hostilities. The analysts' latest numerical assessments of the likelihood of such hostilities, calculated according to the Bayesian formula of probabilities, are presented in the graph on page 2. Below this, a second graph shows the movement of the group's assessments over the past few months. The second part of the project is an experimental application of the same Bayesian technique to scenarios of improved relations. The third part of this project is a chart of overall Sino-Soviet tensions, based upon subjective evaluations by the participants. Progress reports will be published on a periodic basis by the Office of Political Research.

This report is a SECRET version of a more highly-classified report, which is available to authorized personnel. This version differs from the original only in omitting "items of evidence" above the SECRET level or with special controls. The reader should realize that the evidence presented here may not be completely representative of the evidence available to the participants.

PRINCIPAL TRENDS:

Despite the changes within the Chinese leadership, there have been no significant changes in Sino-Soviet relations. Most participants felt that tensions eased somewhat during the period, because the Chinese intransigence which prevailed while Mao was alive is at least subject now to change. Although the Chinese have given no sign of interest in improved relations, the Soviets appear to be willing to consider any opening. **The probabilities of hostilities within the next six months remain quite low.**

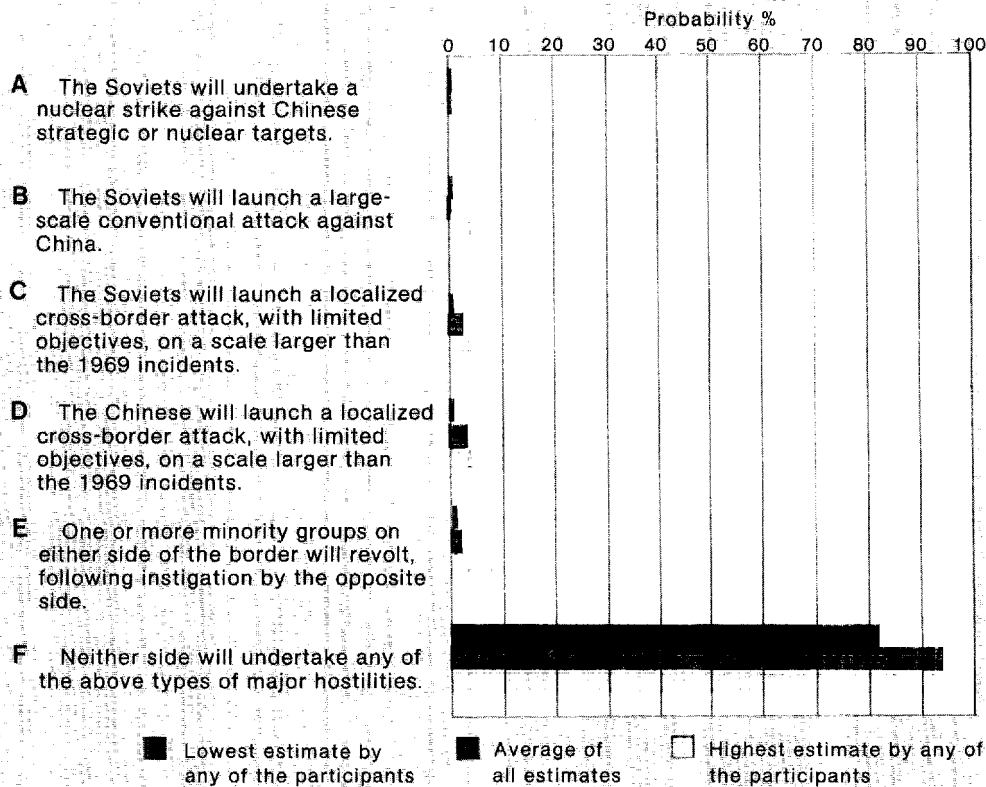
NOTE—Comments on these reports will be welcomed [redacted]
[redacted] of the Office of Political Research, who is coordinating this project.

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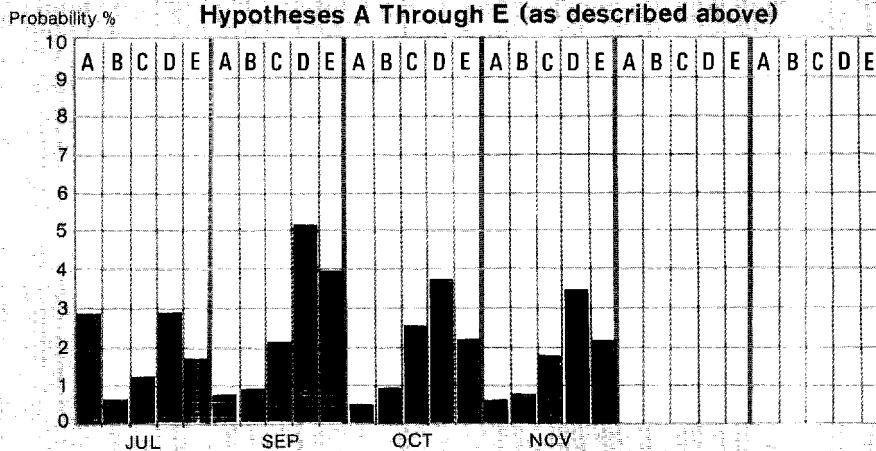
A Bayesian Analysis of the Likelihood of Sino-Soviet Hostilities

Before 1 May 1977

Current Status of the Assessment -- as of 4 November



A Time Chart Showing the Movement of the Group's Averages for Hypotheses A Through E (as described above)



NOTE: For the assessments from June 1974 thru July 1976 see OPR 501-5, 11 Dec. 1974, OPR 501-9, 22 May 1975, and PR76-10055, 2 July 1976.

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ITEMS OF EVIDENCE CONSIDERED IN THE REVISION OF 5 NOVEMBER:

1. An article by free-lance Soviet journalist Victor Louis published in the *London Evening News* and *France Soir* on 14 October welcomed the purge of Chinese radicals, expressed hope that military men trained in the USSR and friendly to the Soviets would now make themselves heard in Peking, but sharply warned the Chinese that Soviet patience was limited. The article threatened that the USSR might do something "irreversible" unless the Chinese made some answering conciliatory gesture within one month. This was regarded as near-ultimatum language although Louis later said that the Soviets were flexible and "one month" should not be taken literally.

After Secretary Kissinger, in evident response to the Louis threat, said the US would take "an extremely dim view of a military attack or even military pressure" on the PRC while the Chinese were preoccupied with internal developments, *Pravda* on 27 October published a brief editorial comment. This article was a denunciation of Kissinger for "clumsy intervention" reflecting a desire to see Sino-Soviet relations "spoiled," and stated that the Soviet Union "has never entertained and does not entertain any designs" on China.

Victor Louis, alluding to Kissinger's remarks, then published in the 31 October/1 November issue of *France Soir* another article claiming that the Chinese on the Sino-Soviet border had been making "friendly gestures" to the Soviets and that Chinese radio propaganda no longer attacked the USSR. (FBIS, 14, 28, and 31 October,

2. Authoritative Chinese media continued to publish harsh anti-Soviet attacks and high-level Chinese officials have underlined Peking's anti-Soviet bias

Peking media have indicated, however, that China is not foreclosing the possibility of improved state relations with the USSR. This can be seen in the revival of a formula—not used in authoritative Chinese comments since Chou En-lai's January 1975 NPC report—affirming China's determination to establish or develop relations with "all" countries on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence. The formula was used in Chiao Kuan-hua's 5 October UN address and in a 2 November PRC announcement on foreign affairs. (FBIS Trends in Communist Media, 3 November,

3. On 17 October, Victor Louis in Moscow told a US Embassy officer that the Soviets, through his 14 October article, had wanted to remind the Chinese of both potential benefits and potential costs of their policy toward the USSR. He said a return to the relationship of the 1950s was clearly out of the question, but Moscow could imagine a relationship like the one it has with India. He added that the Soviet approach was born both of doubt about what really is happening in China and a

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need to show for the record a clear Soviet attempt to reduce the confrontation.

[redacted]

4. [redacted]
Chinese Embassy in Moscow, Li Feng-lin, told [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] an American Embassy officer there that the Soviet articles (the first Victor Louis article and the latest Aleksandrov article) were not genuine signals to Peking, but were aimed mainly at Soviet and foreign audiences. Li said that in this way Moscow was trying to appear reasonable and saddle Peking with the responsibility for the Sino-Soviet stalemate. Li continued that the Soviets "know what they must do" to improve relations, that the border issue is indeed the central issue (among others), that there had been no "basic" progress in the border talks, and that substantive exchanges at the talks only took place when Deputy Foreign Minister Ilichev, absent from the talks for one and one-half years to date, was present.

[redacted]

5. At a [redacted] a
Chinese Embassy officer, Hu En-tsai, [redacted]

[redacted] said that the Chinese have told the Soviets that they will "no longer accept" planes and generators, which are the two biggest items in the total, but which inflate the figures. Hu said that if the Russians want to maintain the present rate of trade—which, he said, would reach about \$370-\$380 million this year—they will have to offer items which China wants. Thus far they have offered only refrigerators, Hu said, which China does not need or want. [redacted]

[redacted]

6. Brezhnev sent a message, published in the Soviet press on 28 October, offering congratulations to Hua Kuo-feng on his appointment. The Chinese rejected it, observing that they had no party-to-party relations with the Soviet Union. (FBIS, 29

[redacted]

7. On 26 October, the Chinese DCM of PRC Embassy Tokyo told a US Embassy officer that purged Chinese radicals had always favored restoration of ties with the USSR and opposed better relations with the US. Their purge signified the end of pro-Soviet influence in China and diminished chances of normalization of Sino-Soviet relations. [redacted]

8. In mid-October, a Chinese Embassy officer in Moscow told [redacted]
[redacted] that Sino-Soviet relations could not possibly improve drastically following the death of Mao and the purge of the radicals. If relations were to improve at all, it would be a long process in which the Soviets would have to take concrete steps to show their sincerity. He saw no evidence of such sincerity in the Aleksandrov article. In particular, the Soviets still refused to acknowledge that there were disputed areas to be settled in the border talks. [redacted]

9. Brezhnev on 25 October said the USSR was prepared to normalize relations with China on the basis of peaceful coexistence; moreover, they were also prepared to restore "good relations" on the basis of "socialist internationalism." He said that issues could now be resolved in the spirit of good neighborliness, but that the matter would depend on the stand taken by the Chinese. He prefaced all this by stressing that the "foreign policy line Peking pursued for one and a half decades has been

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greatly discredited throughout the world." [REDACTED]

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10. A commentator on Radio Peace and Progress discussed conjectures that Sino-Soviet relations would improve after Mao's death and said that "I personally do not share that opinion," since the Chinese have reaffirmed their intention to pursue the foreign policy of Mao's time, and this "leaves no space for improvement of Sino-Soviet relations." (FBIS, 10 and 12 October, [REDACTED])

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11. A Chinese Foreign Ministry official told French journalists in Peking on 1 November that "Certain foreign friends believe the Soviet Union is waving an olive branch with regard to China, but from what we in China can see it is no olive branch but a poison arrow . . . China's position cannot change. If the Soviet Union really wants the controversy and polemics between us to end, the Soviet Union should admit all the errors committed since 1960, that is to say, it must change its political line . . . We place no hope in a change of the Soviet political line." (Hong Kong AFP, 1 November, [REDACTED])

12. Soviet Sinologists Sukharchuk and Delyusin of Oriental Institute flatly told a US Embassy officer in Moscow that there would be no additional Soviet concessions on the border. Sukharchuk added that the Soviet position was already reasonable—even generous—and there was no need to change it. [REDACTED]

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13. In the same conversation, Delyusin told the embassy officer that he thought the Chinese would continue to buy substantial quantities of Western and Japanese technology, because it was better than Soviet technology, but that there were certain fields where Soviet equipment was "good enough" and less expensive. Also, he thought the USSR was the only likely buyer for some of the things China produces which "nobody else wants." Therefore, he thought someone in the Chinese leadership would eventually be willing to expand trade with the USSR, although this would probably take several years. [REDACTED]

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14. [REDACTED] Vice Premier Ku Mu confirmed China's intent to adhere to the basic details of "Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in foreign affairs" and denied that Sino-Soviet relations would improve. Ku noted that China had opposed the Soviets for 20 years, had no illusions about them, and would continue to oppose hegemonism (which he tied to the unchanging imperialist nature of the Soviet Union.) [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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16. The Chinese gave a film cocktail party for the Russians in honor of their National Day. Peking's publication of the event emphasized Moscow's failure to publicize a similar event in the USSR on the occasion of China's National Day in early October. The Soviets may have been reluctant to call attention to the absence of a Chinese Ambassador, but they have subsequently publicized two meetings of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Society. (FBIS, October and November, [REDACTED])

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25X1 17. [] stated that the Soviets were cautious in their comments to them about how soon Mao's death might influence Sino-Soviet relations, and that the Chinese rejection of the message of condolence was not unexpected, but that it had been worth a try. []

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25X1 18. Several East European attachés in Peking have approached their West European counterparts for ideas on how the USSR might go about easing tensions with China. []

25X1 The graphs on the following page illustrate the results of an experimental extension of the Bayesian method. For over two years in this project the method has been successfully used to examine the likelihood of hostilities. Shortly after Mao's death, a set of scenarios of improved relations was posed, to be evaluated in the same way against the items of evidence collected in the project. These scenarios are shown as G through K on the graphs.

Selected participants evaluated these scenarios in October and November, and the visible results show relatively little movement. This indicates that improved relations are as probable now as they were a month ago, and are still quite unlikely.

There are at least two significant problems with this extension, which dictate the use of the word **experimental**:

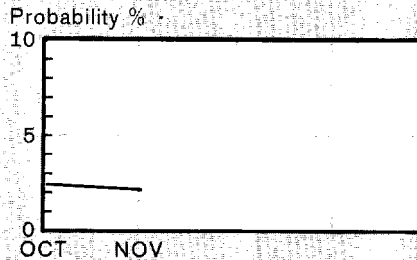
- whereas scenarios of hostilities can reasonably be considered to be mutually exclusive (meaning that one and only one would occur), the scenarios of improved relations might well overlap (that is, two or more might well occur simultaneously).
- whereas hostilities can be initiated by one side, so that a Chinese decision to attack could proceed independently, any improvement in relations requires both sides to agree. Thus, a Soviet desire to reestablish party-to-party relations would be only half the story; Chinese inflexibility could stymie any initiative and lower the probability to zero.

These and other problems are still unresolved, and represent significant qualifications on the predictions which result from the process. Nevertheless, the Bayesian method is robust enough to be useful in many types of imperfect situations, and the advantages of graphic representation suggest that the results may still be useful to a wide range of readers. It is expected that changes will be made over time, and comments, criticism, and suggestions will be welcomed by the coordinator.

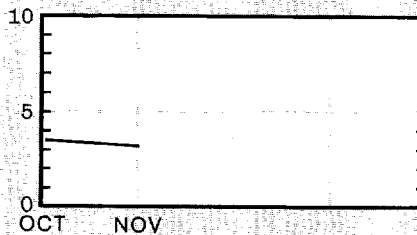
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A Bayesian Analysis of the Likelihood of Improvements in Sino-Soviet Relations

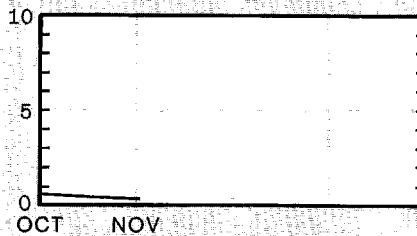
G There will be a settlement of the border dispute within six months.



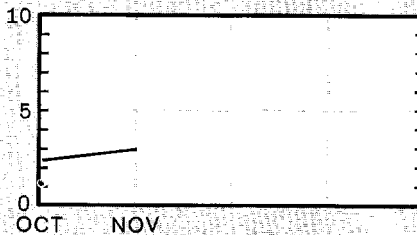
H There will be a significant improvement in economic relations within six months.



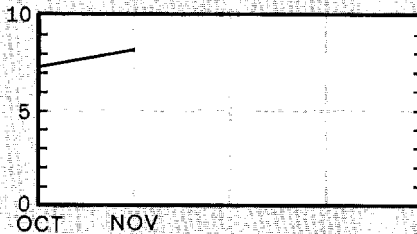
I Party-to-party relations will be restored within six months.



J There will be a joint statement about mutual relations within six months.



K There will be a meeting of Politburo-level representatives within six months.



Values shown are average figures for all participants.



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ANALYTIC TECHNIQUES USED IN THIS PROJECT:

The graphs on page 2 show the range and average of analysts' estimates of the likelihood of hostilities; the Bayesian method of calculation is used. This method, as applied here, systematizes a series of appraisals of incoming intelligence made independently by individual analysts. Every participant weighs each new piece of relevant data in terms of the hypotheses shown, which, for the purpose of this exercise, are considered to be mutually exclusive. Simple mathematical calculations, applying the new evidence to the analysts' previous estimates, then yield updated estimates, which serve as the basis for the chart.

The chart on page 7 is an experimental extension of the same Bayesian technique to scenarios of improved relations.

The chart on page 9 is an ongoing measurement of the level of Sino-Soviet tensions. It is not a Bayesian analysis; no specific hypotheses are posed and no mathematical calculations are made on the basis of prior estimates. Instead, at the start and at bimonthly intervals, each of the participants selects a position on the scale of 0 to 100 to represent his best judgment of the current general state of tensions between Moscow and Peking. (The points 10 and 70 have been designated as reference points, as explained on the chart.) Small shifts from the analysts' initial positions may not prove to be meaningful, but abrupt or sustained movement in the lines will be significant.

The measurement of the degree of general tension should be considered as complementary to—but independent of—the estimates of the likelihood of hostilities. Taken together, the two approaches ensure continuing examination of the probabilities of conflict and of the overall state of relations between the USSR and China.

The items of new evidence considered each period are identified by the participants themselves, consolidated by OPR, and then resubmitted to all the analysts for their evaluations—both in terms of the Bayes hypotheses and as factors bearing on the general state of tensions.

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